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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY
OF LESLIE WEATHERHEAD AND OF ORAL ROBERTS
AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

By

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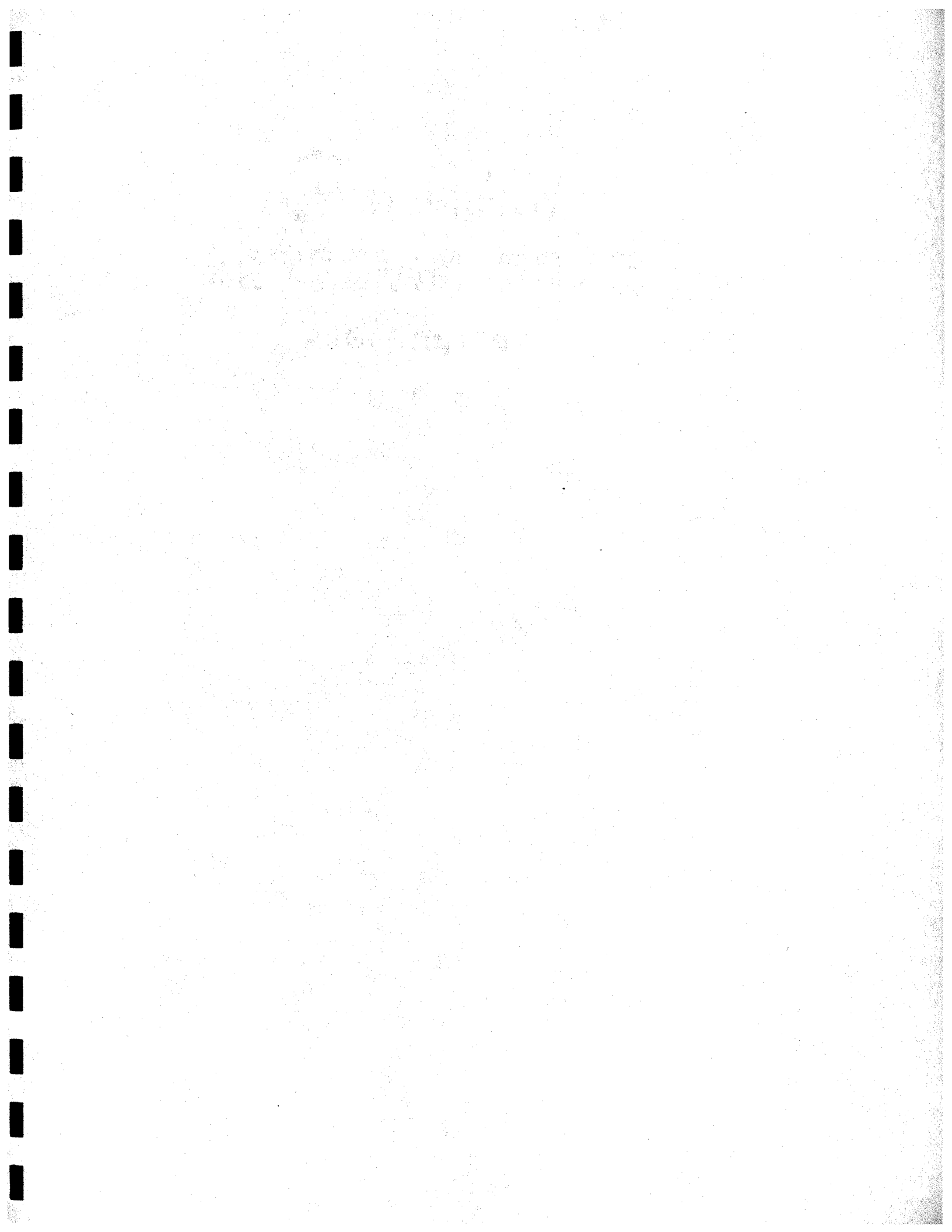
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INTRODUCTION

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY
OF LESLIE WEATHERHEAD AND OF ORAL ROBERTS
AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject

1. The Subject Stated and Explained

This thesis proposes to deal with a comparative study of divine healing in the life, beliefs and ministry of Leslie Weatherhead and of Oral Roberts. It will seek to present a survey of the life, beliefs and ministry of divine healing first of Weatherhead and then of Roberts. It will then compare the two men in the three areas mentioned. A summary and conclusion will be made to complete the study.

The life of each man will be briefly surveyed with particular emphasis given to the way each felt guided to accept the ministry of divine healing. Beliefs concerning divine healing will be studied from the point of view of each of these men. Then the ministry of divine healing that is based on their beliefs will be observed. A comparison will follow which will attempt to point up important similarities and differences in order that significant conclusions may be reached.

Leslie Weatherhead is an outstanding leader in the Methodist Church in England, the minister of the well-known City Temple in London. His divine healing ministry is aided by both his congregation and a special program which he calls the Church Psychological Clinic.

Oral Roberts is a well-known American radio and television evangelist who lays great stress on his ministry of divine healing. He has traveled extensively in the United States and has worked in several foreign countries, drawing large crowds as he presents his evangelistic and healing program. He was formerly a minister in the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

2. The Subject Justified

The subject of divine healing has become increasingly important to the Christian church in recent years. Many sects claiming divine healing power are drawing more and more followers. A number of individuals claiming divine healing ability are gaining wide popularity. Within denominations, also, there has been a growing ministry in the area of divine healing. Thus, it was felt that a thesis written in the field of divine healing would make a significant contribution to an important area of interest of the Christian church today.

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1. "Sherzer estimates that ten million Americans belong to or are influenced strongly by a large number of small sects and individual religious leaders who are not identified with any group or organization. The influence of sects and independent preachers and religious healers is an American religious phenomenon that needs to be considered." Margaret Ronaldson, *The Place of Healing in the Life of the Church in Light of the Ministry of Jesus, A Thesis for The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1953, p. v.*
2. W. Paul Monteath, *The Case for Spiritual Healing, Presbyterian Life, Vol. 8, No. 24, Dayton, Ohio, Presbyterian Life, Inc., December 1955, p. 10.*
Gertrude D. McKelvey, *Does God Heal Sickness Today?, Christian Herald, Vol. 17, No. 6, New York, N.Y., Christian Herald Association, June 1954, p. 19.*
Philip Marquart, M.D., *Miracles, Christian Life, Vol. 16, No. 8, Chicago, Illinois, Sunday Magazine, Inc., December 1954, p. 20.*

It is without question that there is little doubt in the minds of Christians that God can heal. But in the light of the variety of avenues by which divine healing appears to be taking place today, there is understandable concern as to how, when and why healing occurs. An aim, therefore, of this thesis will be to help answer some of the questions and/or indicate where valid answers may be found.

Weatherhead and Roberts have been chosen as subjects of study because they represent opposite approaches to divine healing. It was felt that both are characteristic of types of healing beliefs and ministries within the Protestant church and are well-known for their own particular type of work. ¹ Weatherhead works within the doctrines and traditions of a large denomination; Roberts ministers on an individual basis, through a corporation he has formed. By comparing opposite approaches to divine healing, it is hoped that significant conclusions will be reached and will profit the reader in helping to relate divine healing to his own beliefs and ministry.

Because both Weatherhead and Roberts are prolific writers, it was also felt that there would be greater opportunity for an unbiased, inductive study of their work.

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1. Weatherhead was given the leadership of a seminar on spiritual healing which met at Wainwright House, Rye, N.Y. in 1954. This was a meeting of leaders in the medical profession as well as ministers and laymen who were doing work in the field of spiritual healing. Spiritual Healing Seminar, Rye, N.Y., Wainwright House Publications, 1954
It was said of Roberts by Cosmopolitan magazine, "Now, to the names Billy Sunday, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Billy Graham can be added Oral Roberts..." Eve Arnold, The Laying On of Hands, Cosmopolitan, Vol. 140, No. 2, New York, The Hearst Corporation, February, 1956, p. 78.

3. The Subject Delimited

The study of divine healing in this thesis will be limited to the life, beliefs and ministry of Weatherhead and of Roberts, and only in so far as each area is related to divine healing. This study is intended to be inductive, with the use of the writings of the two men as the major portion of resource material.

In view of the variety of meanings given to the term divine healing and because of the various synonyms used to describe this idea, a definition will be essential. In this thesis, the term divine healing is intended to refer primarily to healing by the direct action of God, without physical and psychological assistance from human sources, and brought about principally by prayer and faith.

B. Plan of Procedure

The first chapter will describe those events in the life of Weatherhead which are related to divine healing. A study will be made of his beliefs which are relative to divine healing. Weatherhead's ministry of divine healing will then be observed. The second chapter will follow a similar pattern in the study of Roberts. A comparative study of the two men in the three areas under consideration will then follow in Chapter III. In closing, a summary will be made and conclusions noted.

C. The Sources of Data

Primary sources of data will be the writings of Weatherhead

and of Roberts. Both have written numerous books, pamphlets and articles concerned with divine healing. Particular attention will be given to Weatherhead's book, Psychology, Religion and Healing, one of the standard works in this area today. Roberts' principal writings on divine healing, Oral Roberts' Life Story, If You Need Healing Do These Things and Deliverance From Fear and Sickness, will be chief sources of data. Secondary sources will include books and articles which are pertinent to this study of divine healing.

CHAPTER I

A STUDY OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY
OF LESLIE WEATHERHEAD
AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

CHAPTER I
A STUDY OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY
OF LESLIE WEATHERHEAD
AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

A. Introduction

This chapter will be devoted to a study of divine healing in the life, beliefs and ministry of Leslie Weatherhead. Attention will be given briefly to his life in order to determine how it has influenced his beliefs and ministry of divine healing. Weatherhead's writings will be examined in order to gain insight into his beliefs concerning divine healing and to determine how these work out in his ministry.

The purpose of this chapter is to study a representative Christian leader who is carrying on a significant divine healing ministry within a traditional Protestant church background. Weatherhead has been chosen because he is well-known as a Methodist pastor and writer, and is a recognized minister in the field of divine healing.

B. Life of Weatherhead
As Related to Divine Healing

Weatherhead was born in London, England in 1893. He was educated at London University, Richmond Theological College and Manchester University. During World War I he served as a lieutenant and later as a chaplain for the British Army, mainly in the Middle

Eastern area.¹

It was while serving as chaplain in India that Weatherhead first became interested in the ministry of healing. A young doctor, with whom he worked in Baghdad, impressed him with his effective use of psychological healing methods. One day, while conversing with Weatherhead, this doctor exclaimed, "You padres ought to be doing most of this."² Weatherhead related his reaction:

I felt he was right. I remembered that Jesus said "Heal the sick", and I always had an uneasy feeling that to relegate all healing to the material methods of the doctors, splendid though that work is, did not really answer the challenge of our Lord's words. Nor could I believe that His challenge was met by the psychologists, especially those who had no place for religion in their thought or practice. I therefore determined to learn all I could about non-physical ways of healing.³

Following his discharge from the army, Weatherhead joined a small unit of doctors and ministers who had a psychological study group. After five years of study with this group in India and England, he returned to the ministry in 1922. He then worked for eleven years at Brunswick Methodist Church in Leeds where he had Sunday evening services of intercession for those both physically and mentally sick. Following this ministry at Leeds, Weatherhead came to the Methodist City Temple in London where he has ministered for the past twenty years, and has continued the practice of intercession for the sick at his Sunday evening services. Also, a Church Psychological Clinic for the treatment

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1. Lefferts A. Loetscher, Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1955, pp.1164-1165.
2. Leslie D. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951, p. 7.
3. Ibid.

of psychogenic diseases has been formed. Weatherhead works with psychiatrists in an effort to bring healing to the mentally ill.

C. Beliefs of Weatherhead
as Related to Divine Healing

1. Christ's Healing Ministry

Weatherhead believes that an understanding of Christ's healing miracles is basic to a ministry of healing. The entire first chapter of his book, Psychology, Religion and Healing, is devoted to a discussion of Christ's healing miracles.

Before he discusses the miracles themselves, he lists four basic assumptions on which he will proceed. 1. He accepts the first three gospels as reliable records of the real acts of an historical Person. 2. He believes that the healing miracles are not merely records of cures of a purely psychogenic nature. 3. He assumes the divinity of Christ. 4. He recognizes that the early Christians looked upon Christ's healing miracles as part of His credentials of His divinity.¹

Weatherhead gives three classifications of healing miracles. Classification I is "Cures which Involve the Mechanism of Suggestion." The second classification is "Cures which Involve a more Complicated Technique." In other words, suggestion plus some other psychological procedure is used. Classification III is "Cures which Involve the

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1. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Influence of a Psychic 'Atmosphere' or the 'Faith' of People other
1
than the Patient."

In the three classifications, all miracles are included except the healing of the ear of Malchus and the stories of those who were raised from the dead. Weatherhead questions the historicity of the story of Malchus and avoids the necessity of comment on the accounts of the raising of the dead by stating: "(they) are outside the scope of
2
this study."

After discussing the miracles, Weatherhead summarizes his concept of Christ's healing ministry:

My own conclusion, from a study of our Lord's miracles in the light of modern psychology, is that while the mental mechanisms which He used can sometimes be identified through our modern psychological knowledge, the miracles certainly cannot be regarded merely as psychotherapeutic treatments. We can learn much that is valuable for psychological techniques by watching Christ at work, but we shall not be able to do the things He did by becoming cleverer psychologists. It seems to me clear that something else is demanded: that we must live our lives on a higher plane and love men with a disciplined devotion akin to His own.³

It is noteworthy that, although Weatherhead stresses the psychological aspect of Christ's ability to heal, he believes that there was also an important supernatural element. This he explains further:

Because of what He was, and because of His relation to, and trust in, God, Christ was able to introduce into the lives of men living on the human plane, energies which belong to the divine or supernatural plane. The effect was what we call a miracle. It was as startling to men as the effect of man's intervention would be to thoughtful and reasoning dogs - if we can imagine - whose wounds and injuries were suddenly healed by calling in

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1. Ibid., pp. 41-42.
2. Ibid., p. 43.
3. Ibid., p. 68.

resources such as penicillin, familiar and law-abiding to man, but outside the range of canine understanding.¹

According to Weatherhead, then, Christ's ministry of divine healing was supernatural because He was able to use powers that are beyond man's ability to comprehend or control but are not necessarily contrary to God's universal laws.

2. God's Will Regarding Illness

Weatherhead does not believe that it is God's will that man be ill. "I believe that the ideal will of God is perfect health for every creature."² "God created the body to be the perfect instrument of the spirit. God's primary will is perfect health."³ He quotes portions of Scripture to prove his belief.

As St. Paul said, we are to glorify God in our bodies, and present them as living sacrifices, holy (= whole, healthy) acceptable to God. I Corinthians 6:20; Romans 12:1; Philippians 1:20.

Jesus regarded suffering as the work of evil forces in the universe, and set all His powers toward their defeat. (He gives Luke 13:16 as proof: "And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?")⁴

However, Weatherhead believes that God's primary will does not hold in every situation. "...no one could pretend that suffering is to be avoided at all costs and under all conditions."⁵ He reasons that God willed the possibility of sin and disease in preference to

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1. Ibid., pp. 486-487.
2. Leslie D. Weatherhead, *Psychology in Service of the Soul*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1930, p. 3.
3. Weatherhead, *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, p. 459.
4. Ibid., p. 460.
5. Ibid., p. 244.

"a race of mechanical toys."¹ God can and does use sickness in order to make His people strong in character.

Indeed, part of the Christian message is that all suffering, joyously accepted and patiently borne, can be woven into God's purposes and become as effective for man's final blessedness as perfect health.²

He gives additional explanation regarding his reasons for believing that health is God's primary will although some Christians are never healed.

Illness most frequently comes to us not as personal penalty but from the ignorance, folly or sin of the great human family to which we belong. We get the family assets, and must often bear its liabilities. But God ever seeks to replace ignorance with knowledge...and sin with holiness, and we must co-operate with Him by striving for these substitutions and do all we know to keep the body as fit as we can. Said a great Christian teacher to me, "It is not wicked to be ill, but it is wicked to be more ill than you need to be."³

3. The Place of Prayer

Weatherhead points out that the purpose of prayer is "to bring the patient into close communion with God and in unity with His will."⁴ Much illness is due to disunity with God and disharmony with His will. Therefore, prayer, according to Weatherhead, used for the purpose of obtaining unity with God will often bring healing as a by-product.

Prayer is always of value in illness, though not necessarily of curative value. The value...has to do with the establishment of harmony with God, on which the welfare of the soul, and often of the body, depends.⁵

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1. Weatherhead, Psychology in Service of the Soul, p. 5.
2. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 244.
3. Ibid., p. 460.
4. Ibid., p. 246.
5. Ibid., p. 243.

In attempting to explain how prayer for the sick is effectual, Weatherhead uses the analogy of a respiratory patient in an oxygen tent. By placing the patient in an atmosphere in which there is a richer supply of oxygen, the doctor produces a situation in which God's healing energy has a better chance to work, using the laws we know about in His universe.

When you pray, you are surrounding John Jones' spirit with an atmosphere of optimism, courage, and the will to be well. He is breathing not his own pessimism but the oxygen of your prayers. God can turn our caring into the patient's courage. He is taking our love and turning it into the patient's belief in his own recovery. We are producing that atmosphere of faith and belief in which our Lord can do his mighty works. He is limited if we don't produce that faith.¹

In further analyzing the effect of prayer on the sick, Weatherhead explains that the change in atmosphere is due to the linking of prayer to the loving purposes and power of God. This has a conscious and/or unconscious effect on the mind of the one who is ill.

The depressed mind becomes optimistic; the defeated mind finds new hope; the worn-out mind finds new strength; and all these have a tremendous effect upon the body, possibly through the endocrine secretions.²

Here, again, Weatherhead emphasizes his belief that God uses the laws of His universe to bring about divine healing, though the laws, to man, may be beyond his understanding and power.

Two observations are made concerning results of healing through prayer, but no attempt is made to fully explain either. The

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1. Spiritual Healing Seminar, Rye, N.Y., Wainwright House Publications, 1954, pp. 68-69.
2. Leslie D. Weatherhead, The Eternal Voice, New York, The Abingdon Press, 1940, p. 221.

first is that prayer for a child is far more effective than prayer for an adult. Weatherhead believes this may be explained by the fact that the child is not "walled up with prejudice."¹ The other concerns a patient who is known and loved by the congregation. Weatherhead claims that prayer is far more effective because the congregation and the patient are "psychically...en rapport."²

A warning is given against the danger of using prayer as a kind of treatment. Prayer, Weatherhead believes, is a means to unity with God and not primarily a means to health.

When our prayer aims at getting the patient into the fullest harmony with God, we believe that it is functioning rightly, and that, as a by-product, in case after case, health will come.³

4. The Place of Faith

Christian faith is defined by Weatherhead as:

the response of the whole man, thinking, feeling and willing, to the impact of God in Christ, by which man comes into a conscious, personal relationship with God.⁴

Three ways of strengthening faith are mentioned. 1. By knowing. The faith that Jesus asked for was "the awareness of a sincere mind to the presence and working of God in His own world,"⁵ though not necessarily a complete comprehension of God. 2. By feeling. "Faith is enormously strengthened when a person is the object of faith and when healthy emotion, like love, or trust, or admiration, is called forth."⁶

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1. Spiritual Healing Seminar, p. 70.
2. Ibid.
3. Weatherhead, The Eternal Voice, pp. 221-222.
4. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 425.
5. Ibid., pp. 426-427.
6. Ibid., p. 428.

Weatherhead believes that it is of primary importance to have a feeling of confidence that God cares, and desires health for each of His children, though health may not be immediately forthcoming. 3. By willing. Action is a part of faith and was required by Jesus on the part of those whom He healed.

Faith is not worth the name if it remains subjective. There must be a doing also; "betting your life there's a God," as Donald Hankey said, and acting on the bet.¹

Weatherhead is definite about that which he feels is the core of faith. Faith required for healing does not refer to faith in getting better. Nor does it refer simply to faith based on the teachings of Jesus.

I mean a personal relationship with a living Friend by faith, which is of a calibre uninjured if physical health is not recovered.²

Therefore, Weatherhead concludes that the role of one who is directing a healing service is to lead the ill to a better understanding and personal knowledge of Jesus Christ.

It is maintained by Weatherhead that the amount of faith is not essential.

A grain of mustard, Jesus said, is the measure of a faith required to move mountains. (Matthew 17:20) What is done for man is not done by his faith, but by Christ through his faith. Faith is rather the psychological frame of mind in which alone God can get near enough to man to do His work.³

To Weatherhead, then, faith is not an instrument by which man influences God but rather a means by which God effects His work in man.

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1. Ibid., p. 429.
2. Ibid., p. 430.
3. Ibid., p. 432.

He attempts to analyze how faith works:

The response (of faith)...is man's way of laying hold on God's willingness, of receiving what God longs to give, of co-operating with God to man's fullest and most fruitful extent.¹

A differentiation is made between healing by faith and healing by suggestion. "In no field of activity is it more confusing to have a false idea of faith than in that of healing."² Weatherhead frequently repeats his belief that "one can have healing without faith in Christ, and faith in Christ without healing."³ He is convinced that many who are healed in healing missions are merely suggestible.

Weatherhead criticizes healing missions also for praising those who are healed for their faith, implying that all who are not healed did not have faith.

The mission spreads a false conception about the nature of faith, the purpose of religion and the problem of suffering.⁴

"Ministers of religion" are criticized for exhorting the sick to:

"have faith", as if it were a matter as simple as turning on a tap or to "pray for faith", as if it were a gift bestowed by heaven independently of the seeker's intellectual wrestling and self-discipline.⁵

In summarizing his chapter, "The Nature and Place of Faith in Healing", Weatherhead says:

Our conclusion must be that any man, sick or well, who calls himself a Christian, should see it to be his duty to make as full a response as he can to God, the God who is like Christ and whom Christ revealed. Thought, feeling and doing must

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 424.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 425.
5. Ibid., p. 423.

be mobilized to this end. It is the Church's duty to call out that response in all healthy ways known to her. If this is done, we have every reason to believe that many who are sick would be healed.¹

5. The Place of the Church

The place of the church in relation to divine healing is of primary importance to Weatherhead. He believes that its healing ministry is the responsibility of each of its members as well as the leader. The core of the church's ministry is intercession and the laying-on of hands.

(The church's ministry includes) the intercession of people united in love for Christ and living disciplined lives, and the laying on of hands, undertaken after prayer and self-discipline, by a priest or minister or other person who is the contact-point, so to speak, of a beloved, believing and united community standing behind him and supporting his ministrations to a patient who has been taught to understand the true nature of Christian faith. This is the ministry which must be recovered and which only the Church can do.²

The long-neglected ministry of the church, then, centers in a group of loving and disciplined people who can be instrumental in healing through the contact point of the laying-on of hands. Weatherhead adds the fact that the only way there may be a "loving community" among those of varied temperament who, by themselves, would fail to heal is by means of the "love of God."³ His love is the source of power.

Weatherhead further explains the effectiveness of the church fellowship in the ministry of divine healing.

He (Jesus) called together men...(and) welded them into a

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1. Ibid., p. 434.

2. Ibid., p. 486.

3. Ibid., p. 488.

unity which became an extension of His incarnation. Any one of His apostles became a striking point of the whole fellowship, and the Spirit of God worked in and through the fellowship as He worked through the personality of Christ Himself. Then real "spiritual healing" became possible to the fellowship through any one of its members. ...The church must feel that the whole loving community is behind the healer and so is the power of Christ, working through all the members to heal the patient.¹

It is significant to Weatherhead that Jesus continued His healing ministry through His apostles using any one of them as instrument of the healing. The one who lays-on his hands is no more important than any other in the church fellowship.

Weatherhead censures the church for having failed in the area of healing.

The truth is that she has lost a supernatural gift of healing. Nor is the lost power to be regained by studying the sporadic cures of "healers" who, from time to time, give us a glimpse of immense recuperative powers resident in, or flowing through, personality.²

He states that this is not said in criticism of such healers; in fact, he encourages the church to utilize their power. Rather, his plea is that the church return to the lost ministry of divine healing. The problem today is not that healing power has been withheld from the church as a whole but rather that it is unappropriated. The last paragraph of Psychology, Religion and Healing is devoted to an appeal to the church:

When the Church returns to her early devotion to Christ and creates united fellowships, even faintly like the small body of men who went out in the power of the Risen Christ and His Spirit to turn the world upside down, then a power more

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1. Ibid., p. 487.

2. Ibid., p. 486.

potent to heal than any atomic bomb to destroy will once more surge through sick souls and minds and bodies. It will be His own power and recognised as such.¹

Establishments similar to the Roman Catholic monasteries and convents are urged. Weatherhead believes that retreats of some type are essential for the church in order that members may have opportunity for prayer, fellowship and self-discipline.²

6. The Place of the Medical Profession

The importance of the medical profession to the ministry of divine healing in the church is emphasized by Weatherhead. The view stems from his opinion that divine healing is but one method by which God brings about healing. Other methods of healing include medicine, surgery, nursing, psychology, dentistry or any other branch of the medical profession.

According to Weatherhead, the ideal situation is one in which the doctor and the minister work together, the doctor doing all he could on the physical and psychological level and the minister using every means God has given him for divine healing. Both are doing the work of God.

What is constantly forgotten is that all healing is the activity of God. All that man can do in the matter of healing is to co-operate with Him. Even prayer is not necessarily a more religious procedure than an operation.³

In his own ministry, Weatherhead works intimately with the medical profession.

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1. Ibid., p. 487.

2. Spiritual Healing Seminar, p. 75.

3. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 437.

I will not undertake any case in which there are physical symptoms or serious mental symptoms unless I can work in co-operation with the patient's doctor or some other adequate medical man.¹

He feels that a church psychological clinic is important to an all-round healing program in the church. In mental illness it is especially important, because the psychiatrist and the minister need one another.

The psychiatrist is able to bring the patient to an understanding of his illness and how he can be helped. But he cannot go beyond this point.

Here true religion can play a most important part. In helping at this point the minister has a supernatural ally. It is indeed supernatural, for no natural science can explain it. It is the desire of most men and women, deep down, to be good. It might be called the "pull upward." ...There is an urge to perfection, a longing for integration, a passion for completeness in personality. On this the minister can rely.²

Weatherhead also believes that the medical profession is essential in certain cases in which the "relevant way of co-operation with God"³ is obviously not through the church. For example, Weatherhead points out that no one prays about his teeth but, rather, pays a visit to his dentist.

Prayer is...not the best way of making a man walk whose leg has been shot off by a shell. Designing and perfecting an artificial limb probably is. And to do this latter in a scientific way, for the sake of helping a sufferer, can be as "religious" an act as prayer, and much more relevant.⁴

7. Problems

Weatherhead deals with some of the perennial problems with which every healer is faced.

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1. Weatherhead, *Psychology in Service of the Soul*, p. 20.
2. Weatherhead, *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, p. 482.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 437.
4. *Ibid.*

a. Limits of Divine Healing

It is the belief of Weatherhead that there are limits to divine healing.

Let us admit in the first place that there must be limits to what prayer can achieve in a human body. I find it impossible to believe that, if a man has lost his leg, prayer could grow him another one in a night.¹

He classifies diseases which cannot be cured by divine healing as in the "thorn-in-the-foot category."² [sic] In this classification he includes many types of infections, missing limbs and broken bones. Any type of "thorn-in-the-foot" disease in which there is damage of physical tissue can only be cured by time and human skill.

However, it is conceded that the "thorn-in-the-foot" category is not really well differentiated.

It is just as important, to my mind, however to insist that no one knows enough to draw such a line, or to make a list of illnesses and divide them into two, and say: "On this side of the line prayer is potent to heal; and on the other side you may as well save your breath."³

He even admits the possibility, though certainly not the probability, of the efficacy of prayer and faith in such cases.

I am not asserting or contradicting the claim that non-material methods of cure are entirely irrelevant and useless to deal with trouble the origin of which is physical. I am only saying that...in the main it is not reasonable to affirm that the cure will be physical.⁴

Weatherhead urges that, no matter what the situation, prayer be offered, for it can never be non-beneficial.

When in doubt pray, for only good can come, and however use-

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1. Weatherhead, The Eternal Voice, pp. 219-220.
2. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 433.
3. Leslie D. Weatherhead, Healing Through Prayer, London, The Epworth Press, 1953, p. 18.
4. Weatherhead, Psychology in Service of the Soul, pp. 8-9.

less prayer may be in a curative sense, if the mind of the patient is buoyed up by the prayers of others and spirit sustained by the knowledge that he is loved and cared for, then the power of his mind over his body, even in an organic illness, may be a powerful means of contributing to the restoration of his health.¹

b. Unsuccessful Attempts

There are three possibilities, according to Weatherhead, why some who are prayed for do not receive healing. The first possibility is that the disease may fall into the "thorn-in-the-foot category"² which has been previously discussed. Secondly, there may not have been enough faith and love.

In both cases we must learn more and learn how to call out faith. Prayer, like everything else in God's universe, is not accidental in its way of working. It is based on laws. And we must try to learn what those laws are and under what conditions they operate.³

In the third place, it may not be God's will that the person be healed. It cannot be assumed that perfect health is God's will under all conditions, as has been previously considered.⁴ Weatherhead uses Paul's experience to prove this. When Paul had prayed three times for healing God answered that His grace was sufficient, for His power is made perfect in weakness. (II Corinthians 12:7-9) It was as though God were saying:

"All right, Paul, you can't be cured for reasons that I won't go into with you, but I can get you to the place where I want you to be as effective through your illness as through your health."⁵

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1. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 246.
2. Cf., p. 15.
3. Weatherhead, The Eternal Voice, pp. 215-216.
4. Cf., p. 5.
5. Spiritual Healing Seminar, p. 72.

c. Relapses

The objection is often given that those who are cured by divine healing tend to experience relapse. To this Weatherhead confidently replies: "Personally, I have met very few."¹ He states that over a period of twenty-five years he has "collected a large number of cases of patients, given up by doctors, who have recovered after prayer... [and] has noted that a significant proportion has taken a turn for the better during the time prayer was offered."² Also, there is evidence of lasting "integration and wholeness"³ in the lives of both those who have received spiritual healing and those who have had relapses. This is due to the wise instruction before the healing service in which unity with God is the primary focus, rather than healing.

Weatherhead does not deny that there are always a few relapses. He attributes this to the fact that prayer, as well as any other means employed for human welfare, is subject to setbacks.

Surely, we are not going to throw over a means of helping people and easing their pain, because in certain cases, through conditions that we do not yet fully understand, there is a relapse.⁴

D. Ministry of Weatherhead
as Related to Divine Healing

1. Healing Services

Weatherhead gives an adequate presentation of bases for selecting patients and reasons for the type of healing service held.

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1. Weatherhead, Healing Through Prayer, p. 17.
2. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 244.
3. Spiritual Healing Seminar, p. 81.
4. Weatherhead, The Eternal Voice, p. 219.

a. Selection of the Patient

Weatherhead prefers to take only those who are under the care of a doctor. After he has had an interview with the patient, the patient's doctor is contacted, inquiry is made concerning his opinion of the case and his permission is secured to call in a consultant or specialist. After consultation for verification of the diagnosis is made, the patient is referred to the Church Psychological Clinic if psychiatric help is needed.¹ If such help is not profitable, a healing service is held for the patient. Afterwards, he is followed and pronounced cured when twelve months have elapsed without a relapse and a doctor's confirmation has been obtained.

b. Types of Healing Services

In Weatherhead's church there are two types of healing services. The real healing meeting is the smaller one in which only a limited number of participants are allowed to attend. Those who are present should understand the purpose of the meeting, which is, first of all, unity with God and, secondarily, healing. The minister should have an adequate understanding of the patient's condition.

No one should be admitted to such a service except the patient, one or two close and sympathetic Christian friends and a small group of selected Christian people who have previously met for prayer and discussion on the whole theme of religion and healing.²

The final and supreme act of the meeting is the laying-on of hands, up to which the service has led.

The laying-on of hands would be the climax of a long pro-

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1. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 480-482.

2. Ibid., p. 205.

cess, not an act of magic carried out before an excited audience eager for a sensational sign. Such a service would signify the dedication of the patient, an act of utter surrender to God in loving trustfulness, rather than an attempt to use God in order to get well, with more than a risk that after recovery God would be forgotten.¹

The second type is the larger or congregational healing service which is primarily a prayer service. Each Sunday evening during the regular church service a "Fellowship of Silence"² is observed in which prayer for the sick is offered. In his experience, Weatherhead has discovered that it is wise to lift only three or four cases in prayer during one evening.

It puts a very great strain on the congregation to ask people to steady their minds and hold them in intense prayer and longing for particular cases of illness.³

Whenever possible, the name of the patient is mentioned if permission⁴ has been obtained from the relatives.

In leading the congregation to pray, Weatherhead attempts to picture for them the situation of the one who is ill. The following was used in an actual case:

Here is Nurse So and So, a member of our church - a girl of nineteen, who is studying at such-and-such a hospital. She is suffering from such-and-such a disease. Her temperature is very high. She cannot sleep without drugs. She has not taken any food for some days. In imagination go into the ward and stand with Christ next to her bed. Do not pray that she may become better, because that is putting her cure in the future. Believe that at this very moment Christ is touching her life, and that His healing power is being made

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1. Ibid., p. 205.
2. Weatherhead, The Eternal Voice, p. 208.
3. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 237.
4. Cf., p. 8.

manifest in her body now.¹

After a short time of silence, he adds, "Please do not let your mind wander. Hold it steadily there, lifting up Nurse So-and-so to God."²

At other times, Weatherhead uses the following:

Let your prayers do what your arms would do if we lived in the days of Christ's presence on earth. We should carry the patient into His presence. Believe that your prayer is bringing the patient and Christ into living proximity and vital relationship. Hold, on the screen of your imagination, a picture of Nurse So-and-so already becoming well.³

It is made clear to the congregation that their prayers are not telling God something He does not already know or persuading Him to do something He is reluctant to do. It is rather that "God's healing, unmaterial energies"⁴ may be let through in a fuller measure by means of prayer, "just as a nurse lets through God's healing material energies in a fuller measure when she cleanses a wound."⁵

2. Means of Healing

Though Weatherhead recognizes that others use different means of healing, the laying-on of hands is the sole method which he employs. He believes that the practice of laying-on of hands is a valuable means of healing, but should not be confined to professional clergy and ministers as long as certain safeguards are followed. Four safeguards or conditions for the laying-on of hands are enumerated:

1. The laying-on of hands should be practiced only in the small healing services, previously referred to. If others are present,

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1. Weatherhead, *The Eternal Voice*, p. 209.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Weatherhead, *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, p. 237.
4. Weatherhead, *The Eternal Voice*, p. 210.
5. Weatherhead, *Psychology, Religion and Healing*, p. 238.

they should be instructed and prepared for the service.

2. Laying-on of hands does not preclude careful medical diagnosis or treatment, whether it be medical, surgical or psychological.

This safeguard should not be regarded as a prop to weak faith. Rather I would suggest that to deny a patient the proved abilities of the doctor and surgeon, or other adequate scientist through whom health is so often restored, could be a definitely unChristian act.¹

The patient must be offered the maximum help available.

3. The minister or whoever officiates must be deeply dedicated. Ideally, there should be behind him a group of similarly dedicated and disciplined people. But the minister should be the "spearhead of the whole Church"² in the service.

One cannot help coming to the conclusion that spiritual power and insight obtained by spiritual discipline avail in this particular matter of the laying on of hands far more powerfully than any kind of psychological training.³

4. It should be made clear to the patient, if he is well enough, that the purpose of the service is the "patient's unity with God."⁴ This is to be primary, whereas the aim for recovery of health is to be secondary.

If this is not made clear to him, and if he remains unhealed, he may fall into depression, even though the real cause of failure to recover is that his disease, the nature of which is imperfectly understood by the physician, is really in the category of purely physiogenic illness.⁵

The patient should understand that the laying-on of hands is

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1. Ibid., p. 134.
2. Ibid., p. 135.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

not a treatment, but an act of worship.

God comes near to the patient, and the patient responds to God. The touching by the priest or minister is the symbol of the divine love making contact with the human soul. The patient is enabled to make a better response to God because of the sacramental act of the touching. Here we have the two essential things in worship - God's love and man's response. ¹

Weatherhead stresses the fact that the laying-on of hands is not magical in any way. Mention is made, however, of certain people who possess what he calls "odidic force" ² or psychic power. These people are enabled to heal by laying-on of hands and may or may not have any profession of Christianity. Tennyson is referred to as possessing the gift. ³ But this type of gift should be distinguished from that which the early Church sanctioned.

St. Peter, for example, tried to cure his mother-in-law, without success; but power came to him later after Pentecost, and, with great confidence, he healed many. But he regarded it as a divine gift received from fellowship with Christ and with the Church, and received only after much discipline. ⁴

E. Summary.

Weatherhead first became interested in the ministry of divine healing through a physician who was successfully using psychological healing methods. He then began to develop his own ministry of healing using a combination of religion and psychology. To date, he

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1. Ibid., pp. 136-137.
2. Weatherhead, Spiritual Healing Seminar, p. 80.
3. Weatherhead, Psychology, Religion and Healing, p. 140.
4. Ibid.

has been in the field of healing for twenty-five years.

Many of his beliefs concerning divine healing are directly related to psychology. For example, he analyzes Christ's healing miracles on a predominantly psychological basis. On the other hand, Weatherhead recognized the ministry of divine healing to be supernatural, though not necessarily contrary to the laws of God.

Weatherhead directs a successful ministry of divine healing at the City Temple in conjunction with the Church Psychological Clinic. Emphasis is given to the importance of having a loving, praying body of believers behind the one who leads divine healing services. Laying-on of hands is practiced in private healing meetings to which only those who will take an active part in the services are invited. The entire congregation takes part in the ministry of divine healing in the regular Sunday evening service by means of a time of prayer.

Weatherhead believes that healing results from unity with God; therefore, his entire ministry of divine healing is directed primarily toward bringing the ill into harmony with God.

CHAPTER II

A STUDY OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY

OF ORAL ROBERTS

AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

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OF ORAL ROBERTS
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A. Introduction

This chapter will deal with a study of the life, beliefs and ministry of Oral Roberts as related to divine healing. The study will be similar to that which was made of Weatherhead in Chapter I. Roberts' writings will also be examined and will serve as the primary source of data for this chapter.

The purpose of this chapter will be to study a significant divine healing ministry which does not have a background of traditional beliefs and practices. Roberts has been chosen as subject of this study because his ministry of divine healing is carried on outside the authority of a denominational group, but is supported by a corporation of which he is the president.

B. Life of Roberts

As Related to Divine Healing

Roberts was born in 1918 in Pontotoc County, Oklahoma, the son of a traveling evangelist. He first became interested in a ministry of divine healing through an illness during his adolescence.

As he relates it, when he was a youth of 17, a victim of tuberculosis and a life-long stutterer, the Lord told him,

"Son, I am going to heal you, and you are to take My healing power to your generation."...He says he received the message from God as he rode to a revival. He had been in bed for more than five months and was lying on a mattress in the back of a car. ...His parents, he recalls practically had to carry him up to the preacher, who said a short prayer commanding the disease to leave him, in the name of Jesus Christ.¹

Roberts relates his feelings during this experience:

"Something struck my lungs, and I began tingling throughout my entire body. ...A beautiful light engulfed me, and the next thing I knew I was running back and forth on the big platform with my hands upraised, shouting at the top of my voice, 'I am healed! I am healed!'"²

He testifies that he was instantly cured, began preaching within two months and has never been afflicted with tuberculosis or stuttering since.

Twelve years later, Roberts began his divine healing ministry. The intervening years were spent pastoring several Pentecostal Holiness churches in Oklahoma. During this period he also took courses at several nearby universities. However, his life was suddenly interrupted and changed by what Roberts calls, "The Dissatisfaction that Drove Me to God."³ He gives witness to a deeply moving experience with God which brought the conviction that he must preach that man can be healed as well as saved.

Roberts later decided to begin an independent ministry in order to have greater freedom to carry on a divine healing ministry. He began holding evangelistic-healing campaigns, traveling mainly in

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1. Phil Dessauer, God Heals -- I Don't, Coronet, Vol. 38, No. 6, Chicago, Ill., Esquire Inc., October, 1955, pp. 55-56.
2. Ibid.
3. Oral Roberts, Oral Roberts' Life Story, Garden City, New York, County Life Press, 1952, p. 61.

western and south-western United States. Tents of increasing size have^{1.} been used and, today, his newest tent seats 18,000. In the last nine or ten years, popularity and success have been so great that a corporation has been formed called Healing Waters, Incorporated of which Roberts is president and his wife is secretary. Coronet magazine describes the corporation:

Healing Waters publishes "America's Healing Magazine," a monthly, with more than 435,000 subscribers, and sells thousands of copies of Roberts' books, including his autobiography. The corporation has bought 175 acres of land at Tulsa for a new headquarters to be known as "City of Faith." ...His (Roberts') goal is a yearly budget of \$4,000,000 which he believes will enable him to be on 200 TV and 500 radio stations once a week.²

An account of plans for the future is also given:

The evangelist put on successful campaigns in the Holy Land and South Africa last year, and is planning to preach soon in Korea, the Philippines and Australia. He sees almost no limit to the souls that can be saved through the "World Outreach" plan. There is talk of publishing Healing Waters material in 50 languages.³

C. Beliefs of Roberts

as Related to Divine Healing

1. Christ's Healing Ministry

Roberts stresses the importance of healing in the ministry of Christ. He comments:

He was a healer and miracle-worker. He spent two thirds of his time healing the sick.⁴

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1. Dessauer, op. cit., p. 61.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Ibid.

4. Roberts, op. cit., p. 65.

This is the portrait of the Great Physician: He was either on His way to heal, He was there delivering the captive, or He had just left and the captive was free.¹

The purpose of Christ's ministry was, according to Roberts: "to bring release to mankind from their fears and frustration and from their spiritual, physical and mental illnesses."² He further explains this with a phrase he frequently repeats: "He came against four enemies of mankind - sin, demons, disease, and fear."³ To Roberts, then, healing was of primary importance in the ministry of Christ.

He explains that Christ's power to heal was due to what Roberts calls, "healing virtue."⁴ In the case of the woman who had the issue of blood, Jesus was aware that someone had touched Him because:

He felt healing virtue had gone out of Him. When she touched Him in faith, she tapped the healing power of Christ, called virtue, and was instantly cured of her malady.⁵

In other words, Christ had the ability to heal because He had within in His being a power which could be used if man had the right response to Him. The same power was transferred to Christ's followers.

He transmitted His power and authority to them (his apostles), and they went forth, casting out devils, healing the sick, preaching the gospel, and getting people saved. He ordained seventy men to do the same thing. He then gave an overall commission to those who would believe in His name; that as they would lay hands on the sick, the sick would recover, also they would be able to cast out demons through believing in His name.⁶

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1. Oral Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, Garden City, N.Y., County Life Press, 1954, p. 27.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
3. Roberts, Oral Roberts Life Story, p. 64.
4. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 19.
5. Ibid.
6. Roberts, Oral Roberts' Life Story, p. 65.

2. God's Will Regarding Illness

Roberts bases his healing ministry on the conviction that illness is not God's will. He believes that disease is the work of Satan and uses both the Old and the New Testament to prove this.

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil;¹
And God turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends...²

Also, sickness is not the will of God because it is part of the curse of the law, according to Roberts' interpretation of Scripture.

God will smite thee with the boil of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scurvy, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.³
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law...⁴

The core of Roberts' premise that illness is not the will of God is concerned with the fact that sickness, being evil, cannot coincide with the purposes of a God whose nature is goodness.

This [John 10:10] showed me that God was a good God and the devil was a bad devil. There is no badness in God and no goodness in the devil. For the first time in my life I had a real foundation for my faith. No longer would I be tormented by questions about God's goodness, His love, and His purposes. When I looked upon a suffering man, I would not have to question myself about its being God's will for him to be sick or to be beaten down by the wicked devil.⁵

It is Roberts' contention that God's will includes healing for all men because He is impartial and does not allow one to receive what another cannot have.

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1. Acts 10:38.
2. Job 42:10.
3. Deuteronomy 28:27.
4. Galatians 3:13.
5. Oral Roberts, Oral Roberts' Life Story, p. 75.

He (Jesus) never said to one, "It is not my will to heal you" and to another, "It is my will to heal you." ¹
If God has ever healed one person, He will heal two, if He heals two, He will heal four, if four then eight and if eight, He will heal all who will believe. ²

3. The Place of Prayer

The place of prayer in the healing of the sick is discussed in a chapter entitled, "How to Write Your Own Ticket With God," ³ in which Roberts interprets the parable of the widow and the judge. ⁴

If the unjust judge would help a woman only because of her insistence, how much more will God, who is in sympathy with our cause, help those who love Him and pray to Him? ⁵

This idea is analyzed further:

If when you pray to God you have any thought of relenting, of giving up before the answer comes, your prayer will doubtless go unanswered. This indicates the kind of people whose prayers God answers. If you have a quitter's spirit, God will let you quit. The kind of person you are counts more than the words or petitions in your prayer. ⁶

Roberts' idea, then, concerning the place of prayer in the healing of the sick has to do with perseverance. If man is persistent enough in asking for healing, God will grant his request.

The problem of God's delay in answering prayer for healing is discussed. Roberts offers several possible explanations. A delay may be needed in order to change attitudes.

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1. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 78.
2. Ibid., p. 23.
3. Ibid., p. 50.
4. Luke 18:5-8.
5. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 50.
6. Ibid., p. 51.

The prayer is not as important as the attitude back of it. Therefore, if there seems to be no answer to your prayers, God is seeking to change and improve the kind of person you are by causing you to re-examine yourself and to see if you have right attitudes and desires and if you have willpower and fortitude.¹

Or, it may be that God's will needs to be accomplished in a particular area before healing can be given.

When God says, "Wait" it means that in a special way His will or purpose is involved. ...In most cases God heals instantly but where His purpose is involved He says, "Wait." When His will has been worked out, then the healing comes.²

A delay may be due to Satan, Roberts believes, who has the power to hold back answers to prayer. He interprets Daniel 10:11,13: "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days..." as representing Satan who kept back Daniel's answer for twenty-one days.

If you pray in all sincerity and faithfulness according to the will of God and the answer will not come through, you may know that the devil has thrown up a blockade. Hold on, God will get the answer through even if he has to put his mighty angels on the case. They will get the answer through to you provided in the meantime that you have held on.³

Roberts implies, then, that all prayer for healing will be answered eventually if one is persistent.

4. The Place of Faith

Because he feels that faith gives access to God's healing power more fully than anything else, Roberts discusses the importance of faith extensively.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

3. Ibid., p. 58.

Like plugging in an electrical connection, making contact with the distant powerhouse, faith that is released - put into action - makes contact with God's power and releases the healing power.¹

He says that the "key to the things we want is our faith in God,"² and that it was faith that "put Christ to work"³ on behalf of the sick. The place of faith in the healing of the sick is of utmost importance because faith, in some way, is able to tap the resources of God's healing power.

Roberts further explains this by describing certain things which must accompany faith, without which faith cannot work. He says that love is essential.

Faith in Him is based on love. Those He healed loved Him for in loving Him they could believe in His healing power. And loving them He could believe in them for He knew that through their faith He could heal them. God is God and He cannot be changed. Faith in Him is based on love.⁴ Love God and you work with God; cooperate with Him and His mighty power is at your command.⁵

Roberts also speaks about "losing yourself in obedience to God"⁶ as essential to the working of faith. The need for a change in sin-filled lives is mentioned. "He [Jesus] demanded only two things: Faith and 'sin no more.'"⁷

The chief reason that faith is not effective in the healing of the sick is sin. Roberts believes that everyone has some measure of faith but the faith may go unused if there is sin in the person's life.

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1. Ibid., p. 110.
2. Ibid., p. 61.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 16.
5. Ibid., p. 60.
6. Ibid., p. 91.
7. Ibid., p. 18.

"Sin is a dominating thing and it produces a division in the soul"¹ and causes faith to remain "dormant and inactive."² He quotes James 2:17: to prove his point, "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." A remedy is offered for this kind of situation: "Let God into your soul and you let His healing virtue into your body."³

The individual's responsibility to exercise faith is stressed. Jesus' response to the Syrophenician woman in Matthew 15:28, "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.", is an indication that faith enables the individual to "(write) your own ticket with God!"⁴

There is a lot that I can do to help you get your healing. Through prayer and fasting, by living, active faith and in bold, direct Holy Ghost preaching plus the prayer of faith - we who believe in God for healing, can actually bring you in where the Lord's power is present to deliver you. But you are on your own from that point.⁵

Healing faith, then, is not magic but requires initiative and action.

Jesus always gave the individual some activity to attend to.

Faith accomplishes things only as it works. You can have faith only as long as you exercise it. You may have faith lying dormant in your soul but it will bring deliverance only as you use it.⁶ The capacity and power to believe is under the control of each individual.⁷

According to Roberts' idea of faith, man controls the faith that resides

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1. Ibid., p. 28.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 29.

4. Ibid., p. 48.

5. Ibid., p. 125.

6. Ibid., p. 126.

7. Oral Roberts, *Deliverance From Fear and From Sickness*, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Oral Roberts, Publisher, 1954, p. 14.

within him and is to be blamed if his faith remains unused and ineffective.

Roberts believes that faith is strengthened if a time limit is set in which healing will take place.

Unless you set a time, it is doubtful if you will ever be delivered. God says, "Today is the day of salvation." When you expect healing at no certain time, you are putting it into the dim, vague and distant future. The longer you wait to believe, the weaker your faith will grow; the more quickly you believe, the stronger your faith will develop. The secret of deliverance is in instant obedience.¹

Faith is also aided if you "turn your faith loose."²

Hang it on some Bible means of deliverance and let go of it. Hold nothing back. Pour all your pent-up faith-emotions into the act of believing God for your deliverance.³

5. The Place of the Church

The place of the church in the ministry of divine healing is not significant in Roberts' beliefs. He makes rather limited reference to the church as a corporate body of believers working together for healing. He speaks of a need for "Partners for Deliverance"⁴ similar to the men who let the lame man down through the roof.⁵

God has promised victory to Partners for Deliverance. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, I will be in the midst of them." Believing with others is not only our privilege but our responsibility.⁶

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1. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 38.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 129.
5. Mark 2:1-12.
6. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 129.

In no other place, however, does Roberts discuss this concept more fully.

Roberts believes that the church, today, has neglected its responsibilities primarily by spiritualizing the life of Christ.

They (the church) have taken away from Him His great physical power over disease and demons. They have only one part of Him they offer to the people -- the spiritual. They leave out His ministry of healing the sick.¹

Therefore, the church must return to a ministry similar to Jesus'. There should be miracles of healing as well as other signs and wonders, and according to Roberts, this will occur only if there is a revival in the church.

The study of the four Gospels and the Book of Acts caused me to turn the searchlight on my own soul and upon the denominational church world. I was struck with the appalling contrast. I found the denominational church world drifting farther and farther away from signs and wonders and getting closer and closer to a material religion, to ritual and ceremony and form. I saw that the only thing that would bring a revival...was a repetition of Pentecost, a revival of signs and wonders, a visitation of God's power...²

It is Roberts' conviction that Pentecostal churches enable their members to receive healing better than other denominational churches..

This may come as a shock to you: you may find it wise to change creeds and church connections before you can truly be healed. Why? There are some churches whose creeds and ministers deny the healing virtue of Christ and reject His gifts of the Spirit for our day. Full Gospel churches more than all others believe in God's supernatural power to heal.³

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1. Roberts, Oral Roberts' Life Story, p. 66.
2. Ibid., p. 68.
3. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p.85.

Thus, Roberts believes that the place of the church in divine healing is not of primary importance. However, he is convinced that the denomination of which he was formerly a member has greater healing power than any other.

6. The Place of the Medical Profession

The importance of the place of the medical profession is well-established in Roberts' beliefs because he acknowledges that God heals by means of science as well as by means of divine healing.

God heals in many ways. He heals through good doctors, through medicine, through nature and climate, through understanding and love. The more they learn about the laws of nature and about the things God has put on this earth for the healing of man's body, the more they will be able to exercise the authority God has given them.¹

However, Roberts suggests that divine healing is of greater value than medical aid.

Where the physician and nurse can only assist nature to bring the cure, God can actually heal. Faith brings a complete cure.²

Roberts is not clear in explaining what he means by a complete cure. One cannot tell whether he means physical, mental and/or spiritual cure. He does explain what he believes to be the difference between the two types of healing.

Prompted by divine love, compassion moves us to bring Satan's victim to God for healing where, on the other hand, sympathy, springing from human concern only, inspires us to take the captive to the healing hands of science whose work of human cure has made great strides but ever falls short of a real cure.³

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1. Roberts, Deliverance From Fear and From Sickness, p. 57.
2. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 117.
3. Ibid., p. 118.

One who has been given the power to heal has ability which transcends that of the medical profession because he is able to go beyond the laws of nature, Roberts declares.

He is God of miraculous power and gives to certain of His humblest and most believing servants His gifts which complement the doctor's skill and rise above the laws of nature and bring forth mighty miracles of Bible deliverance.¹

Roberts' idea, then, of the place of the medical profession in divine healing is that God heals through medical science but the healing is not as "complete"² as healing which is brought about by divine healing.

7. Problems

a. Limits of Divine Healing

It is Roberts' conviction that there need be no limits to divine healing.

My faith has complete mastery over all the diseases in my body. Not just part of them but all of them and as I believe, I will be healed.³

On the other hand, he has found limits to what he is able to accomplish through divine healing.

I have not been able to bring healing to as many blind people as I want to.⁴

When a woman was presented for healing who needed "restoration of all her muscles,"⁵ Roberts responded:

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1. Ibid., p. 85.

2. Cf., p. 35.

3. Roberts, Deliverance From Fear and From Sickness, p. 69.

4. Ibid., p. 64.

5. G.H. Montgomery, Oral Roberts in Action, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Oral Roberts' Tract Society.

That is going to require a miracle. Actually, it is a little beyond my ministry of healing. But I am going to pray for you any way, and I am going to exercise all the faith I have, and I want you to believe with me. ¹

The testimony is given that the woman was healed. But another statement by Roberts is also rather significant:

If I could bring healing to 25 per cent of those who ask for it, I'd be the happiest man in the world. ²

b. Unsuccessful Attempts

A close colleague of Roberts once commented: "To be perfectly honest one must admit that thousands go away and apparently are not healed."³ Roberts, too, admits that he has had many failures in his ministry of divine healing, and he lists several reasons for this failure. There may be a lack of understanding or humility on the part of the individual who has come for healing.

A lot of people want to be healed. The reason they are not healed is because they do not understand how to believe right. Then there are some people who want God to heal them regardless of their own believing. To them, healing is some kind of magic. ⁴

There are thousands of people who are being turned down when they pray to God all because they refuse to let God truly change them. They want God on their own terms or not at all. ⁵

Roberts himself, though perhaps through no conscious fault on his part, may limit healing power.

Sometimes I work myself down in praying for the multitudes who throng our meetings. When I get real tired my faith doesn't work very well... There are times when I fail and I cannot determine the reason. Maybe I wasn't ready or maybe the people weren't. At any rate God's

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1. Ibid., p. 64.
2. Montgomery, G. H., Oral Roberts in Action, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Oral Roberts Tract Society.
3. Montgomery, op. cit.
4. Roberts, Deliverance from Fear and Sickness, p. 66.
5. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 48.

power did not flow through me. When His power is not upon me I cannot deliver the people. 1

The healing ability of Roberts is dependent upon the power given by God which resides in his right hand. 2

Christians who have afflictions similar to Paul's "thorn in the flesh," as described in II Corinthians 12:7-9, may find prayer for divine healing unsuccessful. It is Roberts' belief that the person "caught up into the third heaven" in II Corinthians 12:2 was Paul himself, and because of this unusual experience, Paul was in danger of "becoming proud and the people might give him more praise than he was worthy of." 3 Therefore, even though Paul prayed three times for healing, God did not heal his affliction.

The thorn became an instrument to keep him humble and dependent on God. God does His mightiest works through such yielded people. The sickness that glorifies God is the one He does not feel best to heal but that gives way to a greater miracle and to serve a larger purpose. 4

This appears to be contradictory to Roberts' conviction that sickness is never the will of God. 5

C. Relapses

Little mention is made concerning relapses except for several references by men writing about Roberts. The Cosmopolitan magazine says: "He admits...some cures are temporary 'because the human mind sets up barriers'...". 6 Coronet magazine writes: "Roberts acknowledges that

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1. Roberts, Oral, Oral Roberts' Life Story, p. 152
2. Dessauer, op. cit.
3. Roberts, Oral, If You Need Healing Do These Things, 52.
4. Loc. cit.
5. Cf. pp. 28, 29.
6. Arnold, Eve, The Laying On of Hands, Cosmopolitan, Vol. 140, No. 2, New York, The Hearst Corporation, February, 1956, p. 78.

some of the apparent 'cures' in the tent are only temporary.¹ A friend, in a tract written about Roberts, says: "Hundreds who seem to be healed afterwards suffer relapses."² In his writings, Roberts nowhere discusses this problem.

D. Ministry of Roberts

As Related to Divine Healing

1. Healing Services

a. Selection of the Patient

It is not able to be determined upon what basis Roberts selects those for whom he prays other than on the basis of limitation of number. Generally, the number of those desiring prayer for healing is so large that prayer cards are distributed and only a certain number of cards are called for in one evening. The sick sometimes have to wait several nights before their card is called.³ Frequently, on the last night of a series of meetings, Roberts allows all who desire healing to enter the prayer line. As a result, there may be hundreds or even thousands in the prayer line. The following is an account of an unusually large healing service:

The last night, Brother Roberts prayed for about 7,000 people. After he had prayed for a prayer line for one hour and 45 minutes, he decided that he would never be able to pray for all the people by having them pass by him. So he had them form a double line one yard apart

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1. Dessauer, op. cit., p. 58.

2. Montgomery, loc. cit.

3. Lois Steward, God Healed Me, America's Healing Magazine, Vol. IX, No. 2, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Healing Waters, Inc., February 1955, p. 14.

all the way around the stadium, approximately one-third of a mile in length. He walked between this double line and touched the people as he walked.¹

Roberts' emphasis is on reaching as many of the sick as he possibly can.

b. Types of Healing Services

In Roberts' ministry, there is one type of healing service. This service takes place in the latter part of his evangelistic-healing meetings.

Preparation for the meetings is important to Roberts.

I set aside four hours of every day for my praying and studying. When I'm in my meetings, no one can get to me from two-thirty until the service starts at seven-thirty.² I become anointed with God's work and the spirit of the Lord builds up in me like a coiled spring. By the time I'm ready to go on, my mind is razor-sharp. I know exactly what I'm going to say and I'm feeling like a lion.³

The meeting begins with a song service led by a colleague. At the appointed time, the attention of the audience is focused on Roberts as he enters through a door behind the speakers' platform. At this time the organ plays Roberts theme song, "Where the Healing Waters Flow."

Thousands join him in the Healing Waters chorus; then he sings a stanza solo, and then the chorus again. This done, "Do you love Him tonight?" the evangelist asks...⁴

His sermon follows which sometimes lasts two hours. The content of his sermons is summarized by an associate:

What the man preaches is faith in God. He preaches the book of Acts and the four Gospels. The four Gospels tell what

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1. G.H. Montgomery, The March of Deliverance, America's Healing Magazine, Vol. IX, No. 3, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Healing Waters, Inc., March, 1955, p.6.
2. Roberts, Oral Roberts Life Story, p. 79.
3. Dessauer, op. cit., p. 58.
4. Montgomery, Oral Roberts in Action.

Jesus began to do and teach. The book of Acts tells how the disciples followed up his work after his death, resurrection and ascension. And this is the source of most of the Oral Roberts sermons.¹

The altar call for sinners to come forward and be saved is blended into the end of the sermon. Those taking part in the altar call first raise their hands, stand, then come forward and go out to the prayer room. After this, Roberts takes his place in a chair at the head of a line of the sick who have come for healing.

Roberts' healing work is always prefaced with an explanation that he is not a healer.

I have no power to heal anyone. I am only a humble instrument in the hands of God, who does the work.²

One by one, except when there is an exceptionally large crowd, the sick walk up the ramp leading to the platform where Roberts sits. The patient is asked his name and address and the illness from which healing is desired. Then Roberts lays his hands on the individual, often on the affected part, and prays a short prayer for healing. The prayer is usually climaxed with the repetition, several times, of the word, "Heal," in a vigorous manner.³ If immediate results are observable, Roberts demonstrates it to the audience. Otherwise, he sends the person down the other side of the ramp with the exhortation to "believe."⁴ The audience usually claps as each of those prayed for walks down the ramp.⁵

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Oral Roberts Television Broadcast, Channel 13, Philadelphia, Pa., January 22, 1956, 6:30 p.m.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

Thus, in his healing services, Roberts places the patient in a position of prominence by giving the audience opportunity to watch the healing and share in the healing experience of the sick. Yet, in all his healing services, Roberts, the healing instrument, is the focal point.

2. Means of Healing

All means of healing, according to Roberts, are directly concerned with a point of contact. He defines a point of contact as: "any point where your faith makes contact with God's power."¹ Its purpose is: "to help connect with the healing virtue of Jesus, who is full of it."² Roberts further analyzes the point of contact:

God is a spirit and sometimes we are confused because He is not directly before us in a human body. A point of contact is given as a means of steadying and helping you to release your faith. Establishing a point of contact is like stepping on the starter of your car, you expect something to happen.³

Your point of contact won't heal you, but it will help you turn your faith loose. Faith, your faith, will deliver you from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet.⁴

Roberts, then, believes that faith needs objective assistance in order to be released and used to its fullest capacity.

A number of types of points of contact are mentioned. The point of contact for the centurion who asked that his servant be healed⁵ was Jesus' voice.

The moment Jesus spoke, he released his faith and his servant

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1. Roberts, Deliverance From Fear and From Sickness, p. 59.
2. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 109.
3. Ibid., p. 30.
4. Roberts, Deliverance From Fear and From Sickness, p. 64.
5. Matthew 8:5-13.

was made whole. The point of contact sets the time. The centurion's time for the healing of his servant was to be the very moment that Jesus spoke.¹

The woman with the issue of blood² used the hem of Jesus' garment for her point of contact.

The moment the woman's hand touched his clothes her faith in him was released. Her released faith made contact with the power resident in his being and immediately he felt it go out of him.³

The handkerchiefs or aprons mentioned in the Book of the Acts gave Roberts the idea of carrying on a similar ministry.

I, too, have been impressed and directed of the Lord to carry on the ministry of healing through cloths so that we are sending out over 10,000 a month. Thousands are being delivered in this manner.⁴

Many other types of points of contact are enumerated such as: anointing with oil,⁵ Roberts' radio broadcasts and television programs, his books⁶ and monthly publication, America's Healing Magazine:⁷

They take our magazine, lay it on their bodies as a point of contact, and get healed! Why? Because our words have life! Because we have the Spirit of God.⁷

Roberts believes that the point of contact God has given him is his right hand.

I have heard His voice...that His healing power would be felt in my right hand for all who would believe. I seldom feel anything in my left hand, but through my right hand I feel the healing virtue of the Son of God. It is a sensation of

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1. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 32.
2. Mark 5:25-34.
3. Roberts, Deliverance From Fear and From Sickness, p. 50.
4. Roberts, If You Need Healing Do These Things, p. 34. (Acts 19:12)
5. Ibid., p. 36.
6. Oral Roberts, You and I Together with God, America's Healing Magazine, Vol. IX, No. 10, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Healing Waters, Inc., October, 1955.
7. Ibid.

God's presence which many of God's servants might feel going all over them, but it is concentrated in my right hand. . . . The moment I feel it my faith is very strong and that is when the miracle is wrought.¹

This is the most significant aspect of Roberts' ministry of healing because it tends to set him apart from other men, both in his own and in his followers' minds, as a special point of contact for the sick. Here is the rationale for the type of meetings that are held, with Roberts as the center of all activity and source of healing power.

E. Summary

Roberts first became interested in the ministry of divine healing after hearing the voice of God commissioning him and promising his own healing. After he experienced divine healing, he began preaching and held a pastorate for twelve years. Later he began his own evangelistic and healing campaigns and has since become well-known in the field of divine healing.

His beliefs concerning divine healing have grown out of personal experience and individual Scriptural interpretation. He is convinced that health is God's will for every Christian and that it may be obtained by faith, which releases God's healing power. Roberts, in theory, accepts the medical profession as God's instrument of healing, although, as far as can be determined, he never incorporates the use of the profession in his actual divine healing ministry. He asserts that divine healing can go beyond the natural laws to which the medical

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1. Roberts, *If You Need Healing Do These Things*, p. 93.

profession is limited and is therefore more complete in its healing.

Roberts carries on a fruitful divine healing ministry in a non-denominational situation. His healing services are incorporated into his evangelistic-healing meetings and may have hundreds of the sick participating. Roberts' emphasis is on himself as healer because he believes that God has given him healing power in a unique sense in his right hand.

CHAPTER III

A COMPARISON OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY

OF WEATHERHEAD AND OF ROBERTS

AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

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A COMPARISON OF THE LIFE, BELIEFS AND MINISTRY OF WEATHERHEAD AND OF ROBERTS AS RELATED TO DIVINE HEALING

A. Introduction

This chapter will endeavor to examine the characteristics and qualities of the life, beliefs and ministry both of Weatherhead and of Roberts in relation to divine healing. It will seek to point up significant resemblances and differences in order that the reader may have a clearer understanding of divine healing as revealed by a comparative study of the two men. It is also the purpose of this chapter to help the reader to come to his own conclusions concerning his personal beliefs and practice in relation to divine healing.

There will be an attempt on the part of the writer to show no bias in this chapter. Weatherhead will usually be mentioned first in each comparison simply because of the order and arrangement of the thesis. Footnotes will be omitted because each area of comparison will follow the same order in which it appears in Chapters I and II.

B. A Comparison of the Life of Weatherhead and of Roberts

The events of Weatherhead's life led naturally to a divine healing ministry with an emphasis on psychological understanding and aid. He was born into the conservative atmosphere of England in the late

1800s. An excellent education and a disciplined army background equipped him for methodical study and practice of divine healing. Work done with a psychological study group of ministers and doctors afforded opportunity to learn to correlate both psychiatric treatment and divine healing. Weatherhead incorporated a divine healing program into his ministry because of an objective conviction that the commission of Jesus to heal the sick was being disregarded by His church and needed serious consideration. Today, Weatherhead is well-known in the field of divine healing, especially among doctors and ministers who emphasize, as he does, the importance of the psychological aspect of divine healing.

Roberts' early life also led in a natural manner to his beliefs and ministry related to divine healing, beliefs which have grown primarily from his own study and experience and a ministry centered on himself as a unique instrument of healing. He was born into the less restricting environment of a western rural American home at the close of World War I. There was no opportunity for acquiring extensive collegiate training. An emotional but sincere experience led Roberts to begin pastorate work in his late teens and later to leave his church and to develop an independent divine healing ministry. Roberts, too, is well-known for his divine healing ministry, especially among those of the Pentecostal denominations.

Though this study reveals contrasts in the backgrounds, early motivations to a healing ministry, church associations and those to whom they minister, yet both are concerned about healing the body and mind as well as the spirit and have been instrumental in carrying out this purpose.

C. A Comparison of the Beliefs of Weatherhead and Roberts as Related to Divine Healing

1. Christ's Healing Ministry

Both Weatherhead and Roberts stress the importance of Jesus' ministry of healing and the direct relation of His ministry to their own. The different emphasis each places on Christ's ministry is reflected in their own beliefs and practices. Weatherhead stresses the psychological, as well as supernatural, bases for the ministry of Christ and therefore for his own ministry. Roberts views Christ's ministry as almost totally supernatural and therefore does not attempt to analyze to any great extent how Christ's miracles were wrought, nor how they occur in his own ministry.

Weatherhead's explanation of Christ's ability to heal has to do with His supernatural understanding of the problems of men and His divine skill in using God's laws to bring healing to the sick. Roberts explains that Jesus had, within His being, healing power which was released when the sick placed their faith in Him.

Weatherhead believes that Christians today may have the same healing power if their lives are lived on as high a plane as Jesus' was and if they love men with as disciplined a devotion as He loved them. Inherent in Roberts' belief is the idea that Christ transmitted His power to his followers, so that, they too, could heal with supernatural power, as He did.

2. God's Will Regarding Illness

Weatherhead and Roberts are both agreed that illness is not

the will of God. However, the premise upon which each bases his conclusions, varies. Weatherhead believes that health is God's ideal will for every creature because He has created the body to be the perfect instrument of the spirit. Thus, the healthy body can best fulfill the purpose for which it was made. Roberts reasons that illness could not be the will of God because the two are diametrically opposed. God is good and sickness is evil; therefore, God could have nothing to do with sickness.

Although Weatherhead's initial premise that illness is not the will of God is similar to Roberts', he goes on to qualify his belief. His idea is that illness can be within the secondary will of God and used to fulfill His purposes. Weatherhead maintains that God placed man in a situation which contained the possibility of sin and sickness in order that man might voluntarily trust his God despite temptation and sickness. Thus, God can and does use illness to cause many of His saints to grow in character. Roberts does not attempt to deal with the problem of the many faithful, trusting Christians who have prayed for healing and yet remain ill.

Both men use Scripture to prove their beliefs concerning the will of God regarding illness. Roberts uses more Scriptural proof than Weatherhead does but his interpretation is questionable and far less dependable than Weatherhead's. Weatherhead's use of Luke 13:16 is more convincing than Roberts' use of Acts 10:38 as proof that sickness is the work of Satan.

Though Roberts' belief does not contain the paradox that Weatherhead's does, he has no comfort to offer Christians who have

trusted God for their illness and yet are not healed.

3. The Place of Prayer

The diverse beliefs concerning the place of prayer in the healing of the sick point up significant differences between Weatherhead and Roberts. To Weatherhead, the purpose of prayer is to bring the patient into closer communion with God and in harmony with His will. His belief is based on the conviction that much illness is due to disunity and disharmony with God. He says that prayer for unity brings healing as a by-product in many, though not all, cases. Roberts believes that the primary purpose of prayer for healing, as pointed out in a chapter entitled "How to Write Your Own Ticket with God", is simply that access to the power of God may be obtained in order to gain healing.

Weatherhead believes that God brings about healing through natural channels. Prayer on the part of others is made effective because God turns their concern into an attitude of courage and their love into belief on the part of the patient. He speaks of prayer as bringing about an atmosphere of optimism, courage and the will to be well which in turn begins to bring about, through natural though not understandable or comprehensible channels, health to the body.

Roberts' emphasis is not upon the way God brings about healing through prayer, as Weatherhead's is. Rather, his beliefs center around why God answers prayer for healing. He maintains that healing will not be accomplished if man does not prove his faith by perseverance in prayer. If one's attitude is right, God will answer prayer for healing,

though the answer may be delayed for a time.

Both Weatherhead and Roberts agree about the importance of prayer in divine healing; both connect the effectiveness of prayer to a fundamental right relationship with God.

4. The Place of Faith

Weatherhead defines faith as the response of the whole being to God by which man comes into a personal relationship with Him. To Roberts, faith is an entity within the Christian which, when released, makes the power of God available.

Faith, according to Weatherhead, based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, is strengthened by knowing Him, feeling Him and being willing to do what He asks. Roberts also believes that love and obedience are necessary aids to faith. He adds that faith cannot be effective for healing if there is the presence of sin. Another way of strengthening faith, according to Roberts, is by setting a time limit in which healing will take place because the quicker one believes, the stronger one's faith will become. Roberts also exhorts Christians to turn their faith loose in order to strengthen faith but explanation of this idea is not given.

Both men bring out the fact that faith must be placed in the Person of Jesus Christ. Weatherhead stresses the fact that faith that brings healing is faith that Christ will bring the sick into unity with Himself, with the understanding that this may or may not bring healing, according to His will. Roberts also emphasizes that God brings healing to those who love Him. However, to him, the primary place of faith in the ministry of divine healing is to achieve health.

Weatherhead thinks that the amount of faith of an individual is not as important as the fact that his faith enables God to accomplish healing. In other words, the psychological frame of mind produced by faith is an excellent channel through which God brings about physical healing by using His laws. Roberts emphasizes the supernatural aspect of faith. He explains that faith that is released makes contact with God's power and thus releases the healing power.

5. The Place of the Church

To Weatherhead, the place of the church in divine healing is of primary importance. The healer merely serves as a contact point between the patient and the church, made up of a group of Christians who are interceding for him. Healing is made possible through their united and loving intercession. Roberts, on the other hand, seldom mentions the place of the church in relation to divine healing. He does make limited reference to the importance and efficacy of corporate believing for the healing of the sick. But his most significant reference to the place of the church concerns a specific church. He believes that the church which is most effective in divine healing is of the Pentecostal type of denomination.

Both Weatherhead and Roberts criticize the modern church for having lost, to a great extent, the power to heal. Weatherhead blames the church for having lost its former devotion to Jesus Christ, thus leaving His healing power unappropriated. Roberts says that the church today has spiritualized Christ's healing miracles and, as a result, offers only spiritual help.

Weatherhead does not feel that his divine healing ministry

would be effective without the prayer backing and loving concern of the Christians in his church. Roberts never mentions a need for the intercession of other believers in his ministry of divine healing. He believes that God works through him on an individual basis.

6. The Place of the Medical Profession

Weatherhead and Roberts believe that the medical profession is important in the ministry of healing because, according to both, God uses the medical profession as well as divine healing to restore health.

However, their similarity in belief goes no further. Weatherhead points out that since all healing is of God, all that man can do is co-operate with Him in the relevant way, whether it be by divine healing or by the medical profession. Roberts believes that healing by prayer and faith is of greater value than healing by the medical profession. Where faith is lacking, the medical profession must be resorted to but it cannot cure as completely as divine healing. Divine healing is able to go beyond the natural law to which the medical profession is limited.

Weatherhead works intimately with the medical profession. He feels that divine healing can be better accomplished when he works with doctors and has as complete a human understanding of the patient's problem as possible. Prayer and advice can, thus, be more discerning. Because Roberts leaves the effecting of healing totally in the hands of God, he sees no need for working with the medical profession. In fact, he prefers not to have dealings with the medical profession since its healings cannot accomplish as much as divine healing alone.

7. Problems

a. Limits of Divine Healing

Weatherhead believes that there are limits to what divine healing can achieve in the human body, though he qualifies this by stating that no one knows enough to decide where the limit is. His belief in divine healing is narrowed by his assertion that it is ineffective when there is damage of physical tissue. However, he leaves a loophole for himself by stating that he cannot deny that such healing is not impossible though not probable and even mentions case histories in which there has been healing of damaged tissues.

Roberts places no limits on divine healing, though he admits that he, in his own ministry of divine healing, has experienced much limitation. Thus, there is a gap between his belief and practice for which no explanation is given.

b. Unsuccessful Attempts

Both men admit to having experienced unsuccessful attempts at praying for divine healing. Weatherhead lists three possible reasons, quite different from those Roberts gives. According to Weatherhead, the illness may fall into the category mentioned previously, in which divine healing is not the relevant way of treating the disease, perhaps because there is physical damage. Or, there may not be enough faith and love in the patient and/or in those who are interceding for him. In both cases, the solution depends on learning more of what the laws of God are and under what conditions they operate. The third possibility is that it may not be God's will to heal the patient. For example, Weatherhead says, Paul was not given a reason for his unsuccessful

attempt in praying for healing other than the fact that God gave him the assurance that He would cause Paul to be just as effective through his illness as through his health.

Roberts also uses Paul's experience as a reason for unsuccessful attempts but interprets it differently. He proves by Paul's experience that illness may bring greater glory to God than health by causing the individual to become more humble and dependent on God. He explains that Paul was refused healing in order that he might be kept humble after the unusual experience of being transported into the third heaven. Other reasons for unsuccessful attempts suggest that the individual may not understand how to believe correctly, or he may not be willing to surrender himself to God, or that the healer himself may be tired or for some other reason may not be ready to aid in the healing.

Actually, both men believe that human frailty and limitation are key factors in unsuccessful attempts.

c. Relapses

Weatherhead does not express concern about relapses because he claims that whether there is permanent physical healing or not, when divine healing takes place there is always definite spiritual growth. He adds that he has seen very few who have suffered relapses. Roberts does not discuss the problem of relapses but, according to friends and interviewers, there are many who are apparently cured in his meetings who later relapse back into their former diseased condition.

D. A Comparison of the Ministry of Weatherhead and of Roberts
as Related to Divine Healing

I. Healing Services

a. Selection of the Patient

Weatherhead takes great care in selecting those who are to take part in his healing services. The patient is interviewed by Weatherhead himself and contact with the patient's doctor is made. Along with this, he also feels the importance of follow-up work and final medical proof that the healing was sound. Roberts' emphasis is on reaching as many of the sick as possible and therefore he sees no reason to limit or select the patients who take part in his healing meetings. Thus, while Weatherhead may pray for one or two people, Roberts may pray for thousands in a healing service.

b. Types of Healing Services

The diverse types of healing services held by the two men reflect their differences in belief.

The purpose for which the healing meetings are held is varied. In Weatherhead's service, everything is aimed toward bringing the patient into a greater unity with God by the dedication and surrender of his life, with healing a secondary aim. To Roberts, the purpose of the healing service is that the sick be encouraged to have faith and to believe that God will use Roberts as His instrument for their healing.

There is nothing similar in the context of the service. Weatherhead carries on his healing ministry in his own well-established church, among those he knows and who know him. Because of the nature of his ministry, Roberts works among strangers most of the time. His usual procedure is to travel from place to place, holding ten-day,

evangelistic-healing meetings.

There is a variance of belief, also, concerning those who should take part in the healing service. Weatherhead allows only a few close friends of the patient, along with a small group of Christians who have had previous preparation for the healing service by prayer and instruction. Roberts, on the other hand, arranges the service so that the individual for whom prayer is being offered is the center of attention of a congregation which may number in the thousands.

The focal point of the meetings is probably the most important difference. Weatherhead claims no unusual powers of healing but, on the contrary, is quite dependent on the small group of praying and interested Christians who attend the service. Roberts depends on the healing power which he believes God has placed in his right hand. From his first appearance in the service, Roberts remains the center of activity and attention.

The climax of the healing services of the two men is similar because both use prayer and the laying-on of hands when the actual healing takes place.

2. Means of Healing

Weatherhead and Roberts both practice the laying-on of hands because the two men agree that it serves as the point of contact. However, they differ concerning the meaning of the point of contact.

Weatherhead's idea is that the minister, or anyone else who is spiritually prepared, who lays his hands on the patient, acts as the contact point for the church of dedicated and praying people. It is an act of worship and is a symbol of God's love making contact with

the human soul. Thus, through the laying-on of hands, the patient is enabled to make a fuller and deeper response to God.

Roberts does not speak of a general ministry of laying-on of hands, but rather discusses the unique ministry which he feels God has given to him. He believes that he has been given God's healing power in his right hand and that the act of laying-on of hands releases the power.

The only means of healing which Weatherhead uses is the laying-on of hands, a logical result of his belief concerning the meaning of the point of contact. Roberts' definition of the point of contact, it being anything objective which enables one to release faith, has led him to consider a wide variety of objects as means of healing.

E. Summary

This chapter has purposed to compare the life, beliefs and ministry of Weatherhead and Roberts in order to point up significant aspects of divine healing as revealed by their similarities and differences.

It was noted that the events in the early years of each man caused his beliefs and ministry to take their own singular and unique turn. Weatherhead incorporated a psychological emphasis into his divine healing ministry within a church background. Roberts, after a personal experience of divine healing, began an independent work of evangelism and healing to which he felt God had called him.

The beliefs of Weatherhead and Roberts as related to divine healing, when compared, revealed some similarities but disclosed mainly

wide differences. Fundamental beliefs were often similar, such as the importance of healing in Christ's ministry, God's will regarding illness and the place of the medical profession in divine healing. But the reasons for these beliefs were strikingly different. Other important beliefs were completely divergent, such as the place of faith and the place of the church in a divine healing ministry.

Because of so many dissimilarities in belief, the ministries of the two men are opposite to one another. Outstanding factors are ideas concerning the ideal size of a healing service and the importance of the healer. Weatherhead feels that a healing ministry can be most beneficial if it deals primarily with individual needs on a personal basis. Thus, he limits his healing services to as few participants as possible. Weatherhead's major role in a healing service is as a point of contact for his church of praying and dedicated Christians. In contrast, Roberts believes that he has been given the responsibility of reaching as many of the sick as possible and therefore attempts to deal with as great a number of the sick as he can, at each healing service. He has the conviction that his special ministry is the use of a unique healing power which God has given to him in his right arm.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary

This thesis has purposed to compare the life, beliefs and ministry of Weatherhead and of Roberts as related to divine healing. The life, beliefs and ministry of each man were studied in Chapters I and II with liberal use of quotes in order that not only the bare ideas may be studied but also the feelings and modes of expression of both. A comparative study was made in Chapter III of the two in relation to divine healing; significant aspects of divine healing as revealed by the comparison were brought out.

The study of the life of Weatherhead revealed that his broad experience and education gave him greater ability to reason out and express his beliefs and ministry of divine healing. He tended to be somewhat ambiguous in certain beliefs, for example, in relation to the divine and psychological aspects of Christ's healing ministry as well as his own ministry and also in relation to God's will regarding illness. On the other hand, Weatherhead made an effort to explain, by these very ambiguities, certain aspects of divine healing which are constantly perplexing to man, such as, man's place and importance in divine healing and also a satisfying answer for sick and suffering Christians who pray seemingly as faithfully for healing as others who are healed, yet health is never restored. Weatherhead's practice of healing was found to be, for the most part, a divine healing ministry which acknowledged supernatural powers at work. His ministry of healing had a wholesome

emphasis on bringing the patient first into unity with God, believing that healing would usually be the natural sequel. Notably, Weatherhead's ministry is carried on in a church situation with responsibility assigned to the congregation as well as to himself for the ministry of divine healing.

The study of the life of Roberts revealed that his beliefs and ministry have arisen out of a background of independence and unusual personal experience. Consequently, his beliefs are the result of individual study and interpretation and his ministry is almost totally independent. Roberts' explanation of his beliefs was rather unclear in a number of instances, for example in his interpretation of Bible verses as proof of his theory concerning God's will in regard to illness and also, in his explanation of the meaning of faith and how it is effective. His beliefs were limited in several important areas, such as in the place of prayer and especially the place of the church in the ministry of divine healing. A study of the ministry of Roberts disclosed a man with a sincere desire to heal as many of the sick as possible, yet bearing the responsibility alone because he believes that he has been commissioned by God to do this work and that he has been given special power to accomplish it. Therefore, his healing services are focused upon himself and, because of the large crowds which he allows to attend the healing service, the patient is exposed to the attention of sometimes thousands of people.

The comparative study of the life, beliefs and ministry of Weatherhead and Roberts in relation to divine healing revealed significant similarities and differences. Similarities were, primarily, in the

area of broad, general principles in the field of divine healing. Differences became apparent when specific reasons for beliefs and rationale for ministrics were given. Both men spoke with deep conviction in the presentation of their ideas, though Weatherhead proved to be far more understandable and convincing. A major contrast was the concept each had of his personal relationship with God and his own importance in his divine healing ministry. Weatherhead expressed an awareness of the need for a close and intimate relationship with God, without which, he -- though simply an instrument of the church -- could not be effective in his ministry. Roberts believes that he is indispensable in his own divine healing ministry and tends to give the impression that prayer is offered and faith is exercised only in order to gain healing. A comparison of the lives of the two men revealed that divine healing is practiced by both the educated and the less well-educated, though ways of expressing such a ministry resulted from environment and experience.

B. Conclusion

As a result of the study of this thesis, the writer believes that the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. In the light of the study of his life, beliefs and ministry in relation to divine healing and the comparison made with Weatherhead, the writer feels that Roberts manifests an obvious lack of knowledge of Scriptural principles and valid Christian experience in relation to the various aspects of divine healing which were studied and is, therefore, frequently unscriptural and illogical. It is

believed, however, that he is a man of God and sincere in his beliefs and ministry.

2. Weatherhead, in general, is carrying on a divine healing ministry which is dependable, seemingly Scriptural (as far as this thesis has gone in its study) and valid in the light of Christian experience.

3. Though there are weaknesses in both men, yet the desire which each has, to bring healing to the whole man - to body and mind as well as spirit - as well as the confidence in God's will and power to accomplish this, expresses an aspect of Christian faith and life which should become a part of the life of every follower of Jesus Christ.

In the light of this study, it is suggested that a more generalized and complete study be made of the expanding interest and work today in the field of divine healing in the Christian church with a view to enumerating general principles which may be applied to the individual Christian life.

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